Maria Maea

As We Come Together

LONG BEACH
CITY COLLEGE

AS WE COME TOGETHER

May 19 – June 17, 2026
LBCC ART GALLERY
4901 E Carson St, Long Beach, CA 90808

Samoan-Mexican artist and Long Beach native Maria Maea presents her first hometown exhibition in collaboration with LBCC students and the Mana Program. Maea's practice brings together land, memory, and material through palm weaving, used as both a sculptural form and a mode of ancestral storytelling. The organic materials— destined to return to the earth— gesture toward impermanence while honoring cultural resilience.

Asking: Where do we exist as a collective? What do we stand for and what can we no longer stand for? *As We Come Together* explores unity and solidarity through ephemeral sculptures made from foraged palm fronds and found materials. LBCC students contribute cast masks, gestures, amulets, and objects of protection, along with their voices and imagery of their neighborhoods. The collective embodiment of these unified figures reminds us of the power of our communal presence-how shared histories, resistance, and care can shape new forms of belonging and sustain us in the face of erasure.

Curated by Karla Aguíñiga, Art Gallery & Exhibitions Manager
Production support by Eve Tuilaepa Diaz
Student Assistants: Noel Bobadilla, Isaac Acosta, Katherie Dominguez and Juan Pablo Rodriguez
Graphic Design by Jonah Coloma
Title handlettering by Eddie Valencia
Event Photography by Eric Jaipal
Installation Photography by Gina Clyne

Special thanks to:
Prof. ZZ Krebs, Prof. Kamisha Sullivan, Prof. Carolyn Castaño, Dr. Janét Hund, Matthew Segotta and the Asian Pacific Islander Desi Heritage Month Planning Committee.

Thank you to our sponsors and financial supporters:
Port of Long Beach , LBCC Foundation and LBCC ASB

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LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION
LBCC ASB ASSOCIATED STUDENT BODY LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE

Opening Reception Performers: Tues, May 19, 2026 | 5:00 – 8:00 p.m
DJ AntDawg (Anthony Baldonado)

Performace: ***the noise of crumpling paper...*** By John Cage
With spoken word poem by Brian Sonia-Wallace
Performed by:
Ariel Campos | LBCC music professor : Spoken word and percussion
Melanie Miranda | LBCC music student: Percussion

May this little life grow even louder

by Brian Sonia-Wallace
Poet Laureate of the City of West Hollywood, California, 2020-2022

'May this little life grow ever louder / a library of song

"will you tend the garden of yourself / do you dare brave the soil?"

"Nobody dreams as hard as hard as poets / and nobody works as hard as clowns"

What beast do you hide under your work shirt / how wide does the god in you extend?

May this little life grow ever louder / a library of song

Forgive me, winter, for I have imagined something else

Every time I close my eyes, the world disappears / I think I'll keep them shut a little longer

Beauty is the pain we attend to / the only way to keep living is to practice'

ARTIST-LED COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OVERVIEW
Artist-in Residence Dates:
April 4 – May 15, 2026

Maria Maea's socially engaged exhibition was developed over six weeks of community led workshops and open lab hours at LBCC's Art Gallery. The workshops offered students and the LBCC community a chance to learn traditional weaving practices while engaging in collective dialogue around indigeneity, colonial erasure, and cultural continuity. Through hands-on participation, students learned how using natural materials will provide them with a deeper understanding of how something as delicate as a frond can hold the strength of generations . The use of organic materials, which will eventually return to the earth is a quiet reminder of the impermanence of all things and the resilience found in that truth.

Community Workshops
Palm Weaving Workshop
Thur, Oct 23 | 12:30 p.m – 1:30pm
*In collaboration with the Mana Program

Amulets and Protection:
Thurs, April 4, 2026 | 12:00 p.m – 2:00 p.m
* In collaboration with Club D' Art

Mask Making:
Fri, April 24, 2026 | 12:00 p.m – 2:00 p.m

Body & Movement Casting:
Fri, May 1, 2026 | 12:00 p.m – 2:00 p.m.

Stance! The Body in Movement & Building the Self and Open Lab Hours:
Mon, May 4 – Fri, May 15, 2026 | 11:00 a.m – 4:00 p.m

Photo by Eric Jaipal

LBCC Community Participants

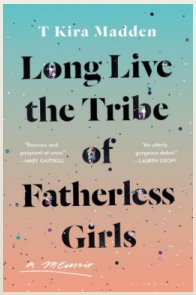
Adrian Myers
Alejandra Coronado
Andrew Guadron
Andria Myers
Andy Cleff
Ardel Deltgen
Arely Andrade
Ashlyn Hairston
Ava Stanczau
Bean Aguirre
Beth A
Bianca Berrios
Brandy Burfield
Brian Burten
Casara
Chris
Christopher Perez
Cruz Rodriguez
Dakota
Deonte Lawrence
Diane Gaitan
Emily Bryant
Ezra LoBianco
Francesca Poling
Heaven Jimenez
Isaac Acosta
Isabella Alvarez
Jayla
Jessica Enrique
Jinha Kim
Jonathan Brown
Jorge Ceballos
Juan Pablo Rodriguez
Jules Taylor
Kamelia Sadeghi
Kamisha Sullivan
Kat Mason
Katherie Dominguez
Kevin Carr
Kim Hernandez
Lavander Leak
Layla Goodwin
Maggie Stthoinos
Matt Mageno
Melody Omisu
Micah Gonzales
Nash Neyra
Nate A
Noah Gonzalez
Noel Bobadilla
Nuvia Forkan
Reese Delosier
Richard Ortiz
Roland Brooks
Ruby Chance
Selah Adkins
Tasia Gemme
ZZ Krebs

Maria Maea
Biography

Maria Maea is a multidisciplinary artist working in sculpture, installation, performance, film and sound. Through her art practice, she deepens her connection to land, somatic memory, and ancestry. Her works act as a residue of her lived experience as a first generation Los Angeleno of Samoan and Mexican heritage. Using plants and repurposed found material gathered throughout Los Angeles, Maea builds film set-like sculptures that relate to storytelling & myth-making. With experience in film production, she understands the invisible labor and processes that happen behind the scenes and creates works that invite viewers into a cinematic universe of her own imagination. She uses palm fronds foraged from the greater Los Angeles area to build these sculptures that play in the space between figurative and abstraction. These sculptures, called future ancestors, are made from concrete, rebar, collected objects and both living and dead plants. The work seeks to complicate art's relationship with institutions around ideas of contamination and preservation. Many works structurally contain seed pods that over time will crumble to dust; however, the seed will remain – making the artworks multi-generational. Maea's greatest inspiration and collaborator is nature itself. Mythos and time also function as sculptural materials in the artist's work, much in the same way as the plants, concrete, and rebar do. By composing pictures of family with family, Maea produces fragmentary, non-linear narratives for herself and her relatives, which pointedly work against Western notions of both temporality and lineage.

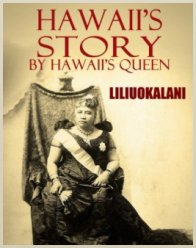
“As We Come Together” Reading List

Created by Prof. Kamisha Sullivan, LBCC English Faculty



Long Live the Tribe of Fatherless Girls: A Memoir
Author: T Kira Mahealani Madden
Publisher: Bloomsbury Publishing (Hogarth imprint)
Publication Year: 2019

T Kira Mahealani Madden is a hapa kanaka maoli author who published her debut memoir in 2019. *Long Live the Tribe of Fatherless Girls* follows her childhood as a Jewish Chinese Hawaiian girl living with her parents in Boca Raton, Florida. The memoir explores themes of addiction, identity, queerness, and the desperately loving friendships of fatherless girls. It is equal parts eulogy and love letter, spanning from the 1960s.



Hawaii's Story by Hawai`i's Queen
Author: Queen Lill'uokalani
Publisher: Lee and Shepard (original 1898); Tuttle Publishing; Mutual Publishing; University of Hawaii Press (various editions)
Publication Year: 1898 (original); multiple reprints

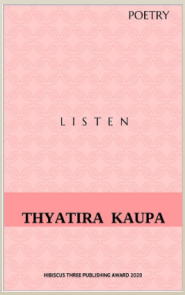
Lill'uokalani was the last queen of the Hawaiian kingdom. After US-led forces overthrew her rule in 1893, Lili'uokalani published her memoir Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen to plead with the American government to give Hawai`i back to the Hawaiian people and to reinstate her as queen. Throughout the memoir, she emphasizes the importance of preserving Hawaiian culture and traditions, and advocates for the restoration of Hawaiian sovereignty.

This Is Paradise: Stories
Author: Kristiana Kahakauwila
Publisher: Hogarth (Crown Publishing Group, Random House)
Publication Year: 2013

Kristiana Kahakauwila is a hapa kanaka maoli (Native Hawaiian) author whose first short story collection came out in 2013 from Hogarth. Her collection captures a longing for home as she tours the islands with her stories. The book explores the deep tensions between local and tourist, tradition and expectation, façade and authentic self, providing an unforgettable portrait of life as it's truly being lived on Maui, Oahu, Kaua'i and the Big Island.

Iep Jaltok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter
Author: Kathy Jethil-Kijiner
Publisher: University of Arizona Press
Publication Year: 2017

Kathy Jethil-Kijiner is a Marshallese poet and founder of the nonprofit Jo-Jikum, which "empowers youth to work toward solutions on environmental issues threatening their home islands." Her debut poetry collection came out from Arizona Press in 2017. The poems focus on ideas around her identity as a Marshallese woman and land protector of her people's islands. This is the first published book of poetry written by a Marshallese author, addressing themes of colonialism, racism, forced migration, nuclear testing legacy, and climate change.

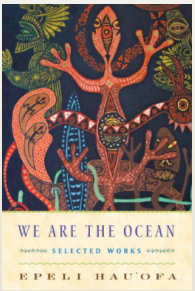


Listen
Author: Thyatira Kaupa
Publisher: Hibiscus Three Publishing
Publication Year: 2020

Thyatira Kaupa delivers an outstanding collection of poems in her debut book, Listen. Exploring themes including relationships, impacts of colonialism, teen friendship and sorcery-related violence, Kaupa offers the reader a glimpse into the everyday life in contemporary Papua New Guinea. The collection won the inaugural Hibiscus Three Publishing Award 2020, an annual opportunity for Papua New Guinean women writers.

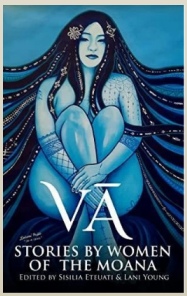
Teine Samoa
Author: Dahlia Malaeulu
Publisher: Mila's Books (self-published)
Publication Year: 2020 (ebook); 2022 (paperback)

Teine Samoa is a journey of cultural identity and discovery for four junior high school students, their families, their teachers and, most importantly, anyone who has ever faced the challenges of being a teen Samoa (Samoan girl). The book explores what it means to be a Samoan girl living in New Zealand, navigating cultural expectations and identity. The paperback edition includes study questions and the Teine Samoa Project featuring real-life stories.



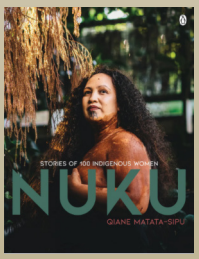
We Are the Ocean: Selected Works
Author: Epeli Hau'ofa
Publisher: University of Hawai`i Press
Publication Year: 2008

We Are the Ocean is a collection of essays, fiction, and poetry by Epeli Hau'ofa, whose writing over the past three decades has consistently challenged prevailing notions about Oceania and prescriptions for its development. The collection includes essays like "Our Sea of Islands," "The Ocean in Us," "Pasts to Remember," and "Our Place Within," outlining his ideas for the emergence of a stronger and freer Oceania. Epeli Hau'ofa (1939-2009) was founder and director of the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture.



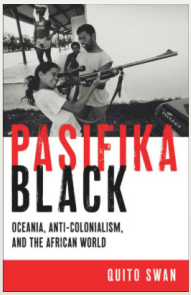
Va: Stories by Women of the Moana
Editors: Sisilia Eteuati and Lani Wendt Young
Publisher: The National University of Samoa/Tatou Publishing
Publication Year: 2021

Stories that defy colonial boundaries and draw on the storytelling and oratory that is our inheritance. Immerse yourself in the intrigue, fantasy, humor and magic of beautiful strong stories by 38 writers from across the Moana. The anthology features over 50 rich stories from Cook Island, Chamorro, Erub Island (Torres Strait), Fijian, Hawaiian, Maori, Ni-Vanuatu, Papua New Guinean, Rotuman, Samoan and Tongan writers. This is the first anthology where so many Moana women writers have gathered together to share their stories.



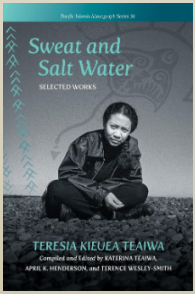
NUKU: Stories of 100 Indigenous Women
Author: Qiane Matata-Sipu
Publisher: QIANE+co (self-published); Penguin Random House NZ (2023 edition)
Publication Year: 2021 (original); 2023 (Penguin edition)

Through telling their stories, the women in this book, NUKU, seek to influence the world around them. The youngest is 14 and the eldest is in her mid-70s. The 100 stories include Oscar-nominated filmmakers, award-winning musicians, scientists, entrepreneurs, tribal leaders, artists, environmental champions, knowledge holders, and mothers. Each story is accompanied by striking photographic portraits. Shortlisted for the 2022 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards.



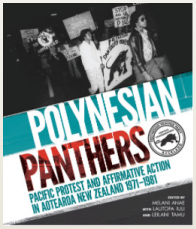
Pasifika Black: Oceania, Anti-Colonialism, and the African World
Author: Quito Swan
Publisher: New York University Press

Oceania is a vast sea of islands, large scale political struggles and immensely significant historical phenomena. Pasifika Black is a compelling history of understudied anti-colonial movements in this region, exploring how indigenous Oceanic activists intentionally forged international connections with the African world in their fights for liberation. Drawing from research conducted across Fiji, Australia, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Britain, and the United States, the book features playwrights, organizers, religious leaders, scholars, Black Power advocates, musicians, environmental justice activists, feminists, and revolutionaries. Winner of the ASALH 2023 Book Prize.



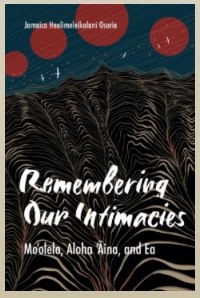
Sweat and Salt Water: Selected Works
Author: Teresia Kieuea Teaiwa
Publisher: University of Hawai`i Press (Pacific Islands Monograph Series); Victoria University of Wellington Press
Publication Year: 2021

This volume features a selection of Teaiwa's scholarly and creative contributions captured in print over a professional career cut short at the height of her productivity. The collection honors her legacy in various scholarly fields, including Pacific studies, Indigenous studies, literary studies, security studies, and gender studies, and on topics ranging from militarism and tourism to politics and pedagogy. Associate Professor Teresia Kieuea Teaiwa (1969-2017) was an influential scholar, teacher, activist and poet, and director of Pacific Studies and Samoan Studies at Victoria University of Wellington.



Polynesian Panthers: Pacific Protest and Affirmative Action in Aotearoa New Zealand 1971-1981
Authors/Editors: Melani Anae, Leilani Tamu, Lautofa Iuli
Publisher: Huia Publishers; Reed New Zealand (earlier edition)
Publication Year: 2015 (Hula); 2006 (Reed)

Forming in 1971, the Polynesian Panther Party sought to raise consciousness and took action in response to the racism and discrimination Pacific peoples faced in New Zealand in the 1970s and 1980s. The Panthers organized prison visit programs, sporting and debating teams, halfway-house services, homework centers, and offered 'people's loans', legal aid and food banks that catered for 600 families at their height. Drawing on interviews, memoirs, poetry, newspaper articles and critical analysis, this is a thought-provoking account of this period in New Zealand.



Remembering Our Intimacies: Mo`olelo, Aloha `Aina, and Ea
Author: Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio
Publisher: University of Minnesota Press
Publication Year: 2021

Hawaiian "aloha `aina" is often described in Western political terms—nationalism, nationhood, even patriotism. In Remembering Our Intimacies, Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio centers on the personal and embodied articulations of aloha `aina to detangle it from the effects of colonialism and occupation. Working at the intersections of Hawaiian knowledge, Indigenous queer theory, and Indigenous feminisms, Remembering Our Intimacies seeks to recuperate Native Hawaiian concepts and ethics around relationality, desire, and belonging firmly grounded in the land, memory, and the body of Native Hawai`i.

To learn more about the Mana Program at LBCC
Visit: lbcc.edu/mana-program
Or in person at:
Long Beach City College, B-206
4901 E. Carson, Long Beach, CA, 90808

Celebrating the Arts

Long Beach's diverse arts and cultural community makes our city a vibrant place to live and work. We're pleased to sponsor Maria Maea's workshops and exhibition at Long Beach City College's Art Gallery.

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